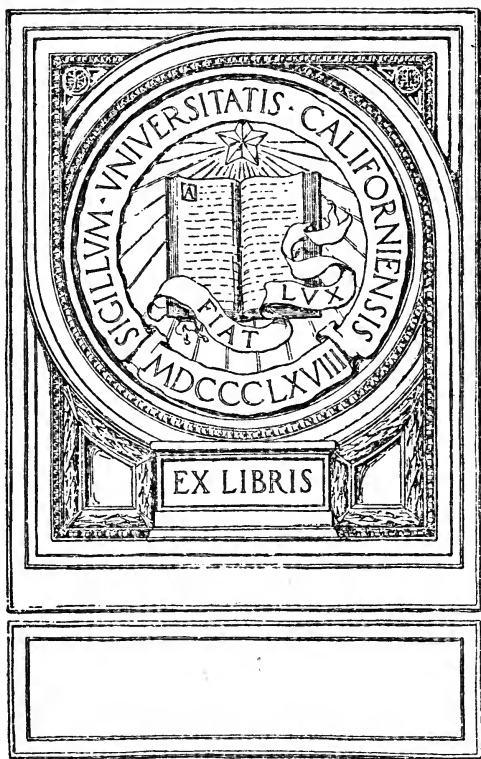


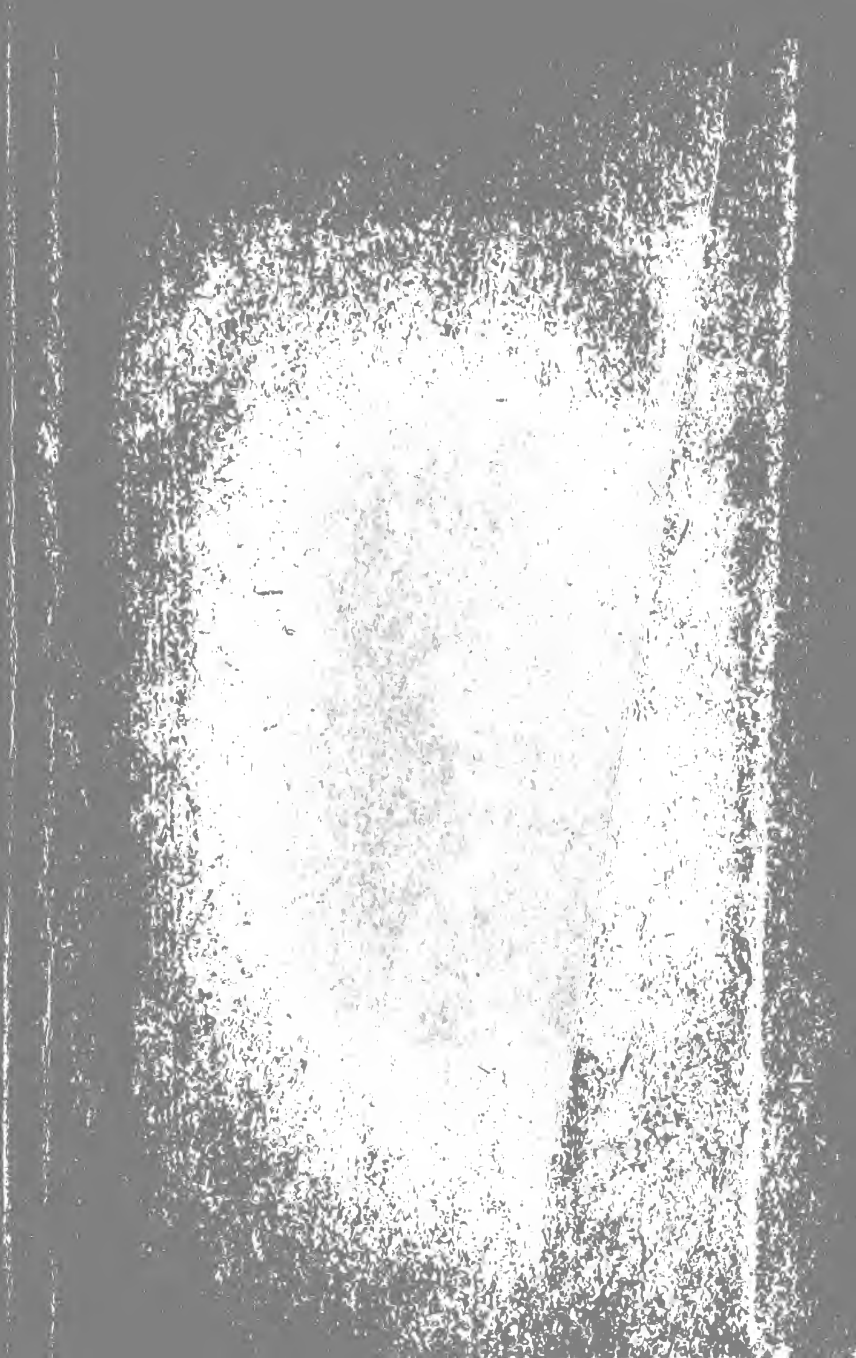
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# THE RIGHT AND WRONG

of the

# MONROE DOCTRINE

BY  
CHARLES F. DOLE



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# THE RIGHT AND WRONG OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

BY CHARLES F. DOLE.

Among the magical words that hypnotize men's minds and keep them from asking intelligent questions, the Monroe Doctrine has a sovereign charm in American politics. Secretary Hay has coupled the mention of this Doctrine with the Golden Rule. Let us venture to ask a few straight questions, and not be afraid to go wherever the honest answer to our questions may carry us.

First, what was the substance of the original Monroe Doctrine in 1823, when it was promulgated? The Spanish-American colonies had then revolted, and we had recognized their independence. There was a boundary question between the United States and Russia. We were a young republic, trying a great experiment in the eyes of a critical and unfriendly world. A "Holy Alliance," organized at the instance of Russia, with a really beautiful program for the good order of Europe, threatened to be turned into an instrument of mischief and oppression and even to help Spain recover her possessions in America. It is likely that, as in many other instances of human alarm, nothing dangerous would have happened. But our government naturally felt nervous, and raised its cry of warning in the form of the Monroe Doctrine. This was merely a declaration, made by the President in his message to Congress, to the effect that the United States would hold it unfriendly in the European powers to take any aggressive action in this continent. Important as the subject now seems, it involved no vote in Congress, nor the careful discussion that an actual vote generally involves. It is doubtful whether many Americans who read Monroe's message gave serious thought to the passages which were destined to give his name prominence. But Americans would have generally agreed in their disinclination to see monarchies set up in the New World, or to suffer any kind of undemocratic system to be brought over here from Europe.

It is noteworthy that the bare statement of the attitude of the United States, without any show of force or preparation for war, was sufficient to secure respectful treatment from the European powers. President Monroe did not feel called upon to ask appropriations for an increase in the navy in

order to "back up" his doctrine. The United States did not possess a formidable navy till it had to build one in the period of the Civil War.

It should also be remarked that England, doubtless for commercial reasons, forwarded our government in its attitude in behalf of the independence of the South American republics. Few would have dreamed at that time that the Monroe Doctrine would ever be used as a menace against England.

See now what enormous political changes have come about within eighty years. Except Russia, there is not an autocratic government left of all the nations who composed the short-lived Holy Alliance. All the others, even Austria and Spain, have adopted constitutional methods. Their people have everywhere been given more or less democratic representation. Spain does not contemplate winning back her colonies. We possess by amicable purchase the very territory over which there was once risk of a boundary dispute with Russia. So far from fearing the extension of autocratic and oppressive governments from Europe to America, the European governments are daily brought to face new demands on the part of their people in the direction of democratic experiments. Autocratic militarism all over the world stands on the defensive. It is becoming recognized as economically and politically intolerable. A great international court has been established on purpose to put an end to war between the nations. It has begun to be used and respected.

Meanwhile the world has become one in geography and international relations. We are practically nearer to the shores of Europe than we are to South America. We have larger and closer interests with China and Japan than we have with Chile and Guatemala.

Let us try now to find what European power, if any, threatens to bring the methods of oppression and tyranny to our continent, or in any way to menace the welfare of the United States. Russia, as we have observed, is out of the question, having voluntarily withdrawn from this continent. She allowed her proud flag to be hauled down in Alaska without the slightest loss of honor.

England is our best friend in all the world. Let us never admit jealousy or suspicion between us. For three thousand miles our territory and the Dominion of Canada march together. By mutual consent neither of us has a ship of war upon the Great Lakes. Let us see to it that we never put warships there. We are obviously safer without them. Like two strong men, dwelling on adjacent farms, we are mutually safeguarded, not by building suspicious fences against each other and purchasing weapons in view of the possibility of our wishing to fight, but rather by assuming that we shall never be so foolish as to injure each other. If we ever disagree, we do not purpose to degrade ourselves by fighting. So far as England is concerned, we may venture boldly to declare that the United States does not need a fort nor a battleship. We contemplate her time-honored naval station at Halifax



as complacently as travelers view the collection of ancient armor in the Tower of London. Moreover, as regards the Monroe Doctrine, the last thing which England could possibly attempt, with her own popular constitution, would be to abridge the liberties of Americans, either North or South.

Summon now the Republic of France, and interrogate her as to her designs and ambitions touching the affairs of America. Probably few Americans could name her cis-Atlantic possessions, so inconspicuous are they. They are costing the French treasury a steady outgo. No intelligent nation would take the gift of them, especially of Martinique, with its tempestuous volcanoes. France has had little experience with American colonies cheerful enough to stir her to desire the risk of a disagreement with the United States for the sake of gaining more territory. Nevertheless, we must admit that we had rather live under the rule of France than in most of the states of South or Central America. From no point of view does France threaten to establish a tyranny over any of the populations in the New World.

We hear of Italians in South America. They have emigrated to the Argentine Republic. Does this fact make the slightest demand upon the United States to build iron ships to guard against the friendly government of Victor Emmanuel? On the contrary, the more Italians in the Argentine Republic, the better we like it. They are more enterprising and industrious than either the Spaniards or the natives, and there is plenty of room for all who wish to go there. Is it conceivable that Italy, saddled with ruinous debt and with a fearful burden of European militarism, should undertake a war of conquest in South America? If this were conceivable, does any one suppose that Italian rule down there, supposing it to prevail, would be less enlightened, or less righteous, than Spanish-American rule has been under the delusive name of "republic"? The people of the United States cannot know Italy, or her political conditions, and feel the slightest apprehension that she is capable of extending to our continent methods of government inimical to our peace.

No other nation in Europe remains, about whose designs in our continent the American people have the need to lose a wink of sleep, except Germany. If the plain truth were told by the alarmists, Germany is very nearly the one power in Christendom on whose account we are called upon to pay a naval "insurance fund" of a hundred millions of dollars a year. The talk about a "German peril" would be laughable, if millions of poor people did not need the money which such incendiary talk costs us; or, worse yet, if this ceaseless talk about possible war with a great nation were not irritating to every one concerned, and naturally provocative of ill feeling.

Why, indeed, should we imagine mischief from Germany? To hear certain speakers and writers, one would suppose that Germany—instead of being a land of arts and laws, of universities and free institutions, with a vast network of world-wide trade—was overrun, as of old, by barbarous

hordes breathing violence and robbery. Germany, in fact, has no quarrel or enmity against the kindred people of the United States. Germany is richer every day by reason of the prosperity of our country. The export and import trade between the United States and Germany amounted in 1911 to over four hundred and fifty millions of dollars. The trade with all the countries of South and Central America for the same year was only about three hundred and ten millions. The trade with all Asia, including India and the British dependencies, was hardly three hundred millions. The boasted "open door" into the Chinese Empire only allowed the passage both ways of about fifty-four millions of dollars' worth of products,—less than one-eighth of our trade with Germany.\* Does any one think that Germany would lightly quarrel with the source of so much bread and butter? For what possible use? She could not conquer and enslave us, nor does she wish to. We have no boundary lines on the planet to make friction between us. We may say again stoutly, as in the case of England, we are safer from any possible attack from Germany without a ship or a fort than we are with the largest navy that Admiral Mahan could desire. For in the one case we should be sure to avoid needless disputes, and should be more than willing on both sides to put any question that might ever arise between us to arbitration: whereas in the other case, standing with loaded guns as it were, some trifling explosion of an angry man's temper might involve the two nations in strife.

It may be asked whether there is not grave risk that Germany may endeavor to plant colonies in South America or to interfere in some way with the affairs of the South American people. We hardly need more than to repeat the paragraph touching this kind of contingency on the part of Italy. Germans are doubtless coming in considerable numbers into the temperate countries of South America. They are a most desirable kind of immigrant. Wherever they go, a higher civilization goes with them. Life and property are safer. A more efficient type of government is demanded. All this is surely for the interest of the United States. We can only be glad for any influences which will tone up the character of the South and Central American states. If they were all Germanized, the whole world, including the United States, would be permanently richer. In fact, the ties of trade and friendship between us and a possible Germanized state in South America would normally tend to be closer than they seem likely to be with the Spanish-American peoples.

Neither is there the slightest evidence that Germany would ever threaten to introduce tyrannical forms of government into South America or to oppress the native peoples. Indeed, so far as it is good for the United States to govern the Philippine Islands for the betterment of their people, the same argument holds in favor of any reasonable method (for example,

\*The value of the total trade to and from the Philippine Islands in the same year (about thirty-seven millions) could not possibly have covered the military and naval cost of holding the Islands.

through purchase or by the final consent of the people) for the extension of German law and political institutions into ill-governed South American states. I do not care to press this argument, which is only valid for those Americans who believe in our colonial experiment. But the argument is far stronger for possible German colonies than it is for the United States, inasmuch as South America is a natural and legitimate field for German immigration, being largely a wilderness, while no large number of Americans will ever care to settle in the Philippine Islands. The time may naturally come when Germany would have the same kind of interest in the welfare of her people beyond the seas that England has in that of the Englishmen in South Africa. There can be no good reason why the United States should look upon such an interest with jealousy or suspicion. For we are unlikely to have any legitimate colonial interest in the southern half of our continent.

Meanwhile, the whole history of colonial settlements goes to show the futility of holding colonies with which the home government is not bound by the ties of good-will. Thus Canada and Australia uphold the British Empire, because they possess practical freedom; while England has to spend hundreds of millions of dollars a year, badly needed by her own poor people, to maintain the armaments necessary to keep her hold over India and other dependencies reluctant to her rule. All precedents go to show that the Empire of Germany would only weaken herself in case she should endeavor to meddle in South America against the interests and the good-will of the people there.

Let us ask another question, hitherto too little considered. On what ground of right is the United States justified in continuing to assert the Monroe Doctrine? We may warn trespassers off our own land. Have we the right to bar our neighbors from lands to which we have no shadow of a title? Suppose that we may do this, as the stronger people, for the sake of humanity, to protect weaker people from oppression. It is surely a dangerous concession to permit a single state, however civilized it deems itself, to assume the right to become a knight-errant, to adjust wrongs in the world, and incidentally to be sheriff, judge and jury on its own motion. But grant this concession for a moment in favor of the United States. While it may have been true eighty years ago that the American people were filled with sympathy for the republics which revolted from Spain, it would be hypocrisy to claim to-day that our people are seriously concerned over the troubles of their South American neighbors. We are rather apt to say that they are unfit to govern themselves. The United States to-day holds eight millions of people on the other side of the globe, very like the South Americans, on the distinct ground that they are not yet fit for independence. Our own course, therefore, bars us from sensitiveness over the perils which South America suffers from the bare possibility of the interference of European states.

Moreover, we have shown that there is no state in Europe which has a mind to do any wrong to South America. So far as the promise of higher civilization goes, the planting of *bona fide* colonies in the vast areas of our southern continent signifies good to humanity.

We must fall back upon a totally different line of reasoning in order to find the only legitimate defense of our Monroe Doctrine. The argument is this: that a nation has the right to safeguard herself against the menace of aggression. Concede that this might have been a sound argument when the Monroe Doctrine was first proclaimed. Our government saw a peril in the setting up of a European system of despotism on this continent. We have made it clear, however, that this peril which disturbed our fathers appears to have vanished forever. No one can show what actual danger to our liberties is threatened by any governmental system that European powers can set up in South America. Let us not even imagine that we are in fear of such a chimerical peril. We have no fear that Germany wishes to harm us while she stays at home in Europe. We have no more ground for fear, if Germany were by some magic to fill South America as full of sturdy German people as Canada is now full of friendly English, Scotch and Frenchmen. The better civilized our neighbors are, the less peril do they threaten to our liberties. Let us then disabuse our minds of any fear of European aggression, to injure American liberties.

But it may be urged that the European governments, as was shown in the Venezuelan episode, may prove disagreeable in their efforts to collect debts due to their subjects or, on occasion, in safeguarding the rights of their colonists in the disorderly South American states. The condition of these states, it is urged, offers points of serious friction between us and our European neighbors. The class of issues here raised stands quite aside from the original intent of the Monroe Doctrine. Here is the need of new international law, of the services of the Hague Tribunal, very likely of the establishment of a permanent Congress of Nations. How far ought any nation to undertake by warships and armies to collect debts for venturesome subjects who have speculated in the tumultuous politics of semi-civilized peoples? How far is the real welfare of the world served by punitive expeditions dispatched in the name of missionaries, travelers, and traders, who have chosen to take their own lives in their hands in the wild regions of the world? There is no call for a Monroe Doctrine on these points. The issue is international, not American. The question is not so much whether France and England may send a fleet to take the customs duties of a dilapidated South American port as it is what course ought any government to take when wily promoters ask its assistance in carrying out their schemes in Bogota or Caracas or Peking; or, again (an equally pertinent question), what remedy, if any, international law ought to give when one of our own cities or states defaults its bonds held in Paris or Berlin.

Grant that it would be uncomfortable to our traders in South America to see European sheriffs holding ports where we wish to do business. We evidently have no right to protest against other nations doing whatever we might do in like circumstances. If we can send armored ships to South America, all the others can do so. If we like to keep the perilous right to collect debts, we must concede it to the others. We may not like to see strangers, or even our own neighbors, taking liberties and quarreling in the next field to our own. But who gives us the right forcibly to drive them out of a field which we do not own? The rule here seems to be the same for the nation as for the individual.

Meanwhile there is one simple proposition the adoption of which could do nothing but good. The Drago Doctrine, associated with the name of an eminent Argentine statesman, is in line with the general trend of civilization and with our own national spirit. A mild and tentative approach to it was made at the Second Hague Conference, under the lead of General Porter, one of our delegates. So far, however, the agreement only looks to the use of an obligation to arbitrate claims for debts, but leaves open the menace of possible war. What we need is a new and complete formulation of the idea of the Drago Doctrine, in such terms that no nation should be permitted under any circumstances to go to war to collect her subjects' debts. It ought to be made infamous to kill innocent people merely because of a quarrel over the payment of debts, presumably incurred under dubious political conditions.

The fact is, whatever the Monroe Doctrine historically means, it no longer requires us to stand guard against any nation in Europe, with a show of force to maintain it. In its most critical form, when it meant a warning against despotism, it only needed to be proclaimed, and never to be defended by fighting ships. In the face of governments practically like our own, the time has come to inquire whether there remains any reasonable issue under the name of the Monroe Doctrine, over which the American people could have the least justification for a conflict of arms with a European government. The interests of the United States in South America are not different from those of other powers, like England and Germany. They are substantially identical interests; they are all obviously involved together with the improvement of material, political and moral conditions in the South American states.

We have spoken so far as if the Monroe Doctrine had reference only to our relations with European nations. The last thing that any one dreamed of in the days of President Monroe was that the doctrine would ever be brought to bear against an Asiatic power! Japan is the one power which seems to cause certain nervous statesmen and builders of battleships a spasm of anxiety. What if Japan should establish a colony on our continent? Having reached our own hands into Asiatic waters to seize territory against the will of its inhabitants, we are now asked to contemplate

the possibility that Japan likewise might reach many thousands of miles after American territory. Calmly considered, however, this seems to be a purely gratuitous cause of apprehension. Those who know Japan best assure us that she harbors no hostile intention against the United States. She is certainly much occupied with costly enterprises at home and in Korea and Manchuria. She has growingly valuable trade relations with us, which tend always to make peace. The worst source of mischief in sight between Japan and us is really what we are doing ourselves by way of making a Gibraltar in Hawaii. What is this but to show fear and suspicion, which in turn excite the like uncivilized passions? Let us even suppose that Japan desired to establish a colony in Mexico or some other state in America. How could she possibly do this, except by the goodwill and agreement of the people by whose side she settled? Does any one imagine that her experience in Formosa has been so cheap and easy as to lead her to seek a hornets' nest on the opposite side of the Pacific Ocean into which to put her hands! But suppose the most unlikely thing, that Mexico or Chile wished the Japanese colony. Can any one show what shadow of right the United States would have to forbid this?

We have sought so far such an interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine as may honorably go in company of the Golden Rule, or, in other words, of international justice. There remains, however, a possible new definition of the doctrine, which should be fairly faced. There is an idea in the air that the United States holds a certain protectorate or suzerainty over the whole continent of America. A manifest destiny is thought to be working in favor of the dominion or suzerainty of a single power from the Arctic Ocean to Patagonia. Porto Rico is ours. Cuba is almost ours. Many believe that Canada will some time desire to be with us. No people to the south of us shows stable promise of what we call good government. The new canal at Panama affords additional reasons for our control of the continent. Boundless resources are yet to be developed in the virgin continent. We are the people who can provide the brains, the capital and the political security requisite for the exploitation of practically a seventh of the surface of the earth.

The new Monroe Doctrine comes thus to mean, frankly, that we want, or at least may some time want, all America for ourselves. We give due notice in advance of our claim of pre-emption. What else does the Monroe Doctrine mean, that there should be the pretense of a necessity to fight for it? What else did President Roosevelt mean by his note of repeated warning to the republics of South and Central America that they must "behave themselves"? Here and nowhere else looms up the need of new battleships and a hundred millions of dollars a year for the navy. It is in regard to South America, and for the extension of the Monroe Doctrine to a control over the continent, that we discover in the political

horizon all manner of colossal foreign responsibilities and the possibilities of friction and war.

The new Monroe Doctrine may kindle the imagination and stir the ambition of thoughtless people; it may tempt some of them with a glamour of power and wealth. We may fancy that we would like to be the suzerain power on the continent, with United States officials in authority in every Spanish and Portuguese American capital. The stern ancient question presses: What right has the United States to assume a protectorate, and much less any form of sovereignty, over South America? The South American governments are as independent as our own; they are growing more stable and less revolutionary every year. There are no traditions common between us to constitute us an acknowledged Lord Protector over them. On the contrary, our conduct toward Colombia and the Philippines, and the extraordinary utterances of some of our public men seem to have already produced a certain nervousness among our Spanish-American neighbors who naturally resent our patronage.

Neither does international law, which has never in the past given the Monroe Doctrine any clearly acknowledged footing, admit the right of the United States to mark off the American continent as its own preserve, and to stand, like a dog in the manger, to warn other friendly peoples from entering it.

But some philanthropic banker may ask: "May we not be good and kind to the States to the south of us? Is it not praiseworthy to install at least an honest fiscal service, supported, of course, if need be, by gunboats, in Honduras and other states, as we have done in Santo Domingo?" Let us not shut our eyes to the seamy side of this enterprise. Would anything persuade us to give our ports and custom-houses into the control of an alien power, however benevolent? Who can show where fiscal control can be hindered from passing subtly over into an actual Protectorate? The story of England in Egypt is the warning answer to this question. Surely, a government of the people, by the people and for the people was never meant to become the machinery for managing other people's affairs in the interest of their creditors. Or, if this ought to be so, it ought to be clearly voted accordingly by the American people after ample discussion, and not foisted upon us, almost without debate in Congress or elsewhere, by the will of the Executive. History shows that it is in such ways as this that the most revolutionary political changes have often been brought about.

It is certain that the millions of the plain American people, who toil and pay the taxes to the tune of about forty dollars a year for every average family, have no valid interests whatever in spending the money or the administrative ability of the country in dubious enterprises beyond the seas, at the behest of ambitious capitalists or politicians, who aim to open markets and run satrapies by the use of national battleships. The people,

who need indefinite services for the expansion of their welfare and happiness at home will never deliberately approve a policy which threatens to dissipate the activities of their government over the length of the continent. The new Monroe Doctrine is a menace to the interests of every American workingman. It is the old story. The few usurp the power of the many to work their own ends.

In short, so far as we are good friends of the South American peoples, so far as we are friends of our own kinsmen over the seas on the continent of Europe, so far as we desire permanent amicable relations with the people of Japan, so far as our intentions in South America are honestly humane and philanthropic, we have no need whatever of the Monroe Doctrine any longer. On the side of our common humanity all our interests are substantially identical. On the other hand, so far as we purpose to exploit the continent for our own selfish interests, so far as we aim at the extension of our power, so far as we purpose to force our forms of civilization and our government upon peoples whom we deem our "inferiors," our new Monroe Doctrine rests upon no grounds of justice or right, it has no place with the Golden Rule, it is not synonymous with human freedom: it depends upon might, and it doubtless tends to provoke jealousy, if not hostility and war.





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